

**WNC Livable Community Initiative –
Thinking Globally, Assessing Regionally, Acting Locally
Federal and State Agency Alignment with Local and Regional Efforts
June 10, 2010 meeting notes**

9:00 – Introductions, Review June 9 meeting outcomes, Develop Agenda for today

Linda Giltz (facilitator) first shared her observations of the June 9 meeting, starting with common themes/issues. She first noted some of the “assets” we have:

- Lots of projects, partnerships and collaboration in the region
- Passion for sustainability in our communities, organizations, programs and projects
- Lots of data, plans, knowledge and expertise in the region
- Individual and organizational commitments to improving our communities

Then the themes around needs/challenges:

- Involving the whole community, especially those who are often not heard from or represented in community decision-making (re-thinking civic engagement strategies)
- Better, more efficient framework or ways to share information and resources
- More connection and alignment between where people live and where they work (and between our economic development, land use and housing planning)
- Region/community-wide awareness of all the initiatives related to sustainability and their inter-relationships
- Overarching regional vision (and guiding principles) that brings project together and helps people make decisions (both locally and regionally)
- JOBS
- Funding for capital investments, projects, business development

Some ideas were mentioned about how or where to start:

- Start where the need is greatest (But – how do we determine this?)
- Start with youth and in the schools
- Start with projects already underway that have community support and that support livability/sustainability principles

Attendees were then invited to offer additions or comments to these thoughts. Here are the common themes they expressed:

- Involve and address the needs of low-income residents and neighborhoods
- Environmental issues underlying or are a part of all projects
- Five livability issues/principles – Jobs, Resources, Energy, Transport, Housing - need to be connected
 - Add Health to livability principles
- Need to clarify regional vision and related benefits, and show how projects fit into vision
- We are poised to take action

- Important to have data-based decision making

Desired Outcomes for Today's meeting (from the group):

- A plan of action – working groups and a timetable; identify people here to work on urban-rural connections
- Identification of potential funding and technical/other resources
- Understanding of how projects and their outcomes fit into a regional vision/plan (note: LOSRC adopted an initial general vision for WNC Livable Communities)
- Identification of what is working and not working (locally, local-federal-state)
- Understanding of specific things needed from federal agencies and others (i.e., “Make it easy for people to help”)
- Clear guidance on federal collaboration goals and results desired -
How can federal agencies help local efforts?
How will the grant and assistance processes work?

After today's meeting – Figure out how we will work together:

How will we support the plan?
Need to develop/agree on a decision-making model and our time commitments.
Develop a clearinghouse/list of regional needs
Focus on collaboration, not competition

Agenda for this morning:

- (1) Focusing on understanding federal goals, assistance, and how we can work together better
- (2) Develop a plan for moving forward

10:00 – Federal Guidelines and Goals – How to work together better

Federal guidelines and goals – How to work better together – what do you need

What is the process for applying for funding under the Sustainable Communities Initiative (SCI)?

There is no combined funding yet, so continue to apply to individual agencies with specific projects. Agency staff prefer to look at specific, concrete projects. They can help with getting other federal agencies to collaborate on project requests. They often share information amongst themselves. But – we need to let them know what is going on.

Relationships are critical – get to know each other and think of working with the individuals rather than the organization/agency.

Federal staff can provide links to other resources

Partnerships and other funding sources are critical to a successful application.

Clearinghouse or mapping of federal resources and priorities would be a helpful resource, but the point was made that there are so many resources, each with its own set of priorities. That is why it is more efficient to begin by discussing a project and letting the staff person provide information on resources pertinent to that project. Someone noted that the Rural Center has developed a resource guide (available at <http://www.ncruralcenter.org/guidebook/index.asp>).

11:00 Example project – feedback for agencies

The group chose to use an example project – Implementing the Wilma Dykeman Riverway Plan – to learn more about the process of working with the state and federal agencies and more specifically what they need from us. It was felt that the information learned would be transferable to other projects.

After Stephanie made a presentation about the project (which was actually a number of projects all tied under the implementation plan), then agency reps asked questions and provided feedback. Here are some highlights of things they want/need to see:

- All want to see the big picture and the individual project; framing into regional vision and values is helpful
- Budget broken down to project level and also shown cumulatively
- Transportation projects need to be multi-modal
- “Purpose and Need” statements – should include broad set of needs (cross-sector)
- Brownfield program is looking for leveraged funds from other federal agencies and health agencies (e.g. Birmingham- from Camilla)

Other notes:

- Take ideas/projects to Rep. Heath Shuler, Sen. Burr, etc. for \$\$
- USDA – can’t fund anything in Asheville – must be in a defined rural area – outside MSA
- Water quality and management – a way to tie Urban-Rural together. Energy (and other) projects also tying together urban-rural areas.
- DOE – there may be some disconnect with DOE because they don’t have regional staff (all are in DC). Jack Britt was mentioned as a local DOE resource.
- Remember the Ecological Enhancement Program (EEP) for restoration projects.

12:45 NEXT STEPS – What, Who, When

1. Follow-up meeting of local organizational group to develop a plan of action – Stephanie to schedule.

We need to answer:

- What does a regional collaboration look like? May need to formalize partnerships.
- Who leads the collaboration?

Michael Leahy would like the HUB SCI to lead the regional partnership and start meeting with interested organizations as soon as possible. He needs to know what other orgs need from HUB SCI for them to support and lead effort, and if they support HUB SCI leading the effort.

2. Complete the community mapping project (Note – network map not geographic map)– M. Leahy

NOTES: (1) Mountain Resources Commission (MRC) also interested in a regional resource list; (2) Include NGO stakeholders

3. Jim F. will meet with M. Leahy to ensure that Michael understands RENCI's role in the/a partnership
4. Land-of-Sky Regional Council (LOS) will identify other projects and partners to include under the regional collaboration
5. Report out – Stephanie will put a meeting summary on the City's website and send a list of attendees with contact information to all attendees